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# A geometric/symmetric series

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A Geometric/Symmetric Series

by

Charles V. Zuill  
1969

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE THESIS PAINTINGS

It is difficult enough to classify or categorize a work of art. It is all the more difficult to say anything of consequence when the work is one's own. There are a few things that I can say about this exhibition that might be helpful, however.

It will be noticed that there are certain things that are common to all the works. All the paintings are symmetrical. With the exception of Grass II, all the paintings were made with the use of the compass and ruler. Color is usually muted and contrasts are never strong.

These are limitations that I have chosen. What I have eliminated and what I have retained fulfills an inner need. Kandinsky said, "The artist is not only justified in using, but is under a moral obligation to use, only those forms which fulfill his own need."<sup>41</sup> Braque adds, "In art, progress does not consist in extension, but in the knowledge of limits."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art trans. Michael Sadlier and others (New York: George Wittenborn, Inc., 1947), p. 74.

<sup>42</sup>Goldwater and Treves, p. 422.

My work is relatively abstract but by no means non-objective. I always start with an idea and usually I carry through the initial plan to a finish. Often, as I paint, other ideas are engendered by the work in progress. This often results in a second painting or even a series of paintings.

The sources for my ideas for painting are rooted in personal experience; especially the observation of nature.

I have attempted in making paintings to effect a balance between thought and its application to the material. Mondrian said, "The only problem in art is to achieve a balance between the subjective and the objective. But it is of the utmost importance that this problem should be solved, in the realm of plastic art--technically, as it were--and not in the realm of thought."<sup>43</sup>

I have found the work of John Cage to be one source of inspiration. His "waking up to the very life we are living" as the primary function of art is significant. He has freely admitted that no music (or art) could ever be as interesting as life itself. He considers that the proper purpose of music is to sober and quiet the mind,

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<sup>43</sup>Robert L. Herbert, ed., Modern Artists on Art (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), pp. 115, 116.



thus rendering it susceptible to divine influence.<sup>44</sup>

Could this not be also the most suitable purpose for the visual arts? I do not claim that I have succeeded; but I have tried.

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<sup>44</sup>Calvin Tomkins, The Bride and the Bachelors (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), pp. 99, 100.

## EXHIBITION

- I. GRASS I and II
- II. Miniature. ROMANESQUE PORTALS
- III. Miniature. NIGHT FLOWER
- IV. DESIGN FROM A TANTRIC MANUSCRIPT
- V. THEME FROM SAINT MATTHEW I, II, III, IV
- VI. THEME FROM SAINT MARK
- VII. KNIGHT
- VIII. GRAVESTONES
- IX. CLAPBOARD
- X. RAIN I and II
- XI. SCAPE
- XII. DAY, NIGHT
- XIII. INTEGRATION, DISINTEGRATION
- XIV. Miniature. FOUNT I and II

I. GRASS I and II

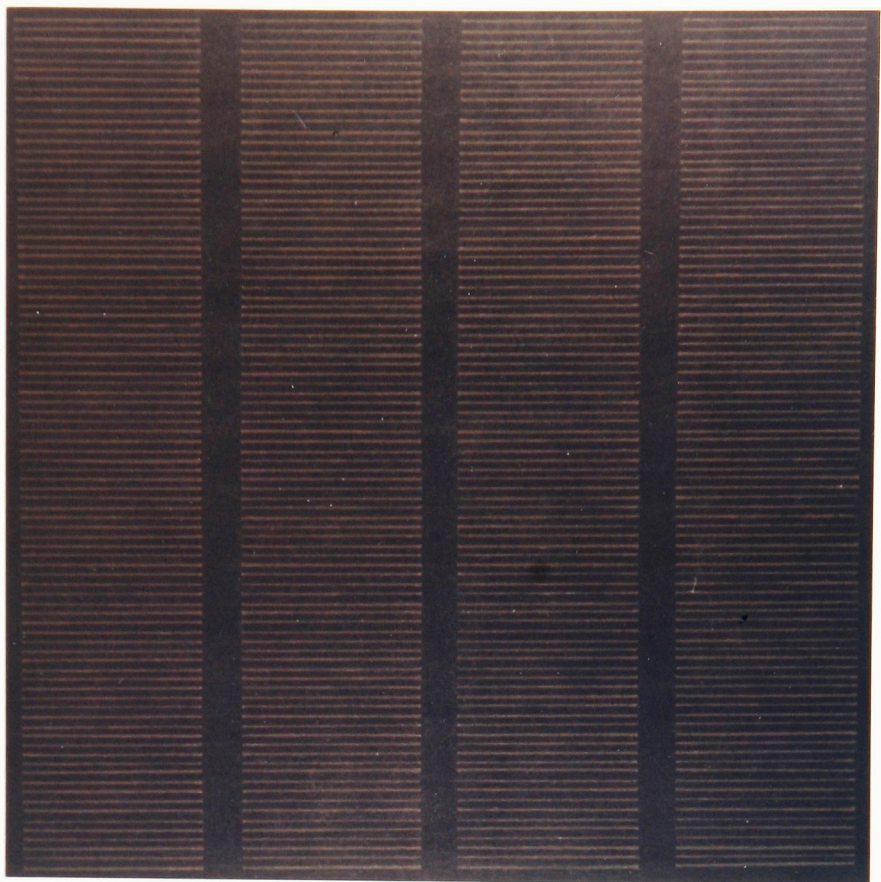
Acrylic on canvas. 24" x 24" October 1968

All flesh is grass  
and all its beauty is like the flower  
of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord  
blows upon it,  
surely the people is grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will  
stand for ever.

Isaiah 40:6-8



II. Miniature. ROMANESQUE PORTALS

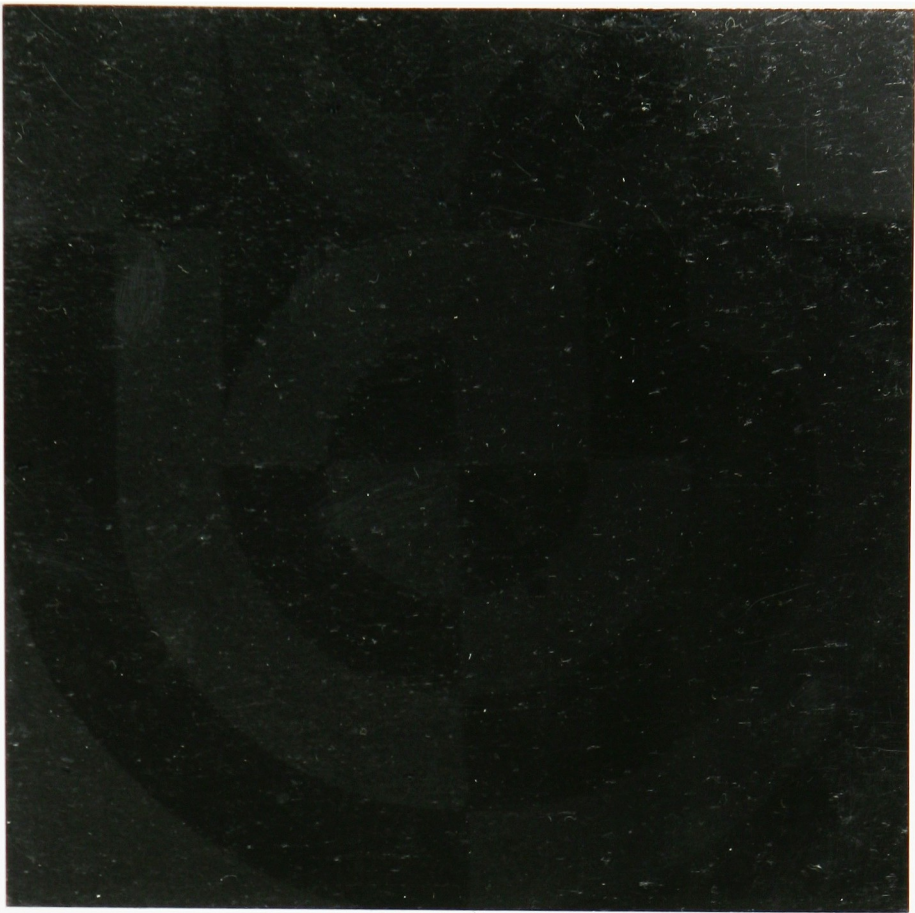
Acrylic on canvas. 5" x 5" December 1968





III. Miniature. NIGHT FLOWER

Acrylic on canvas. 5" x 5" December 1968





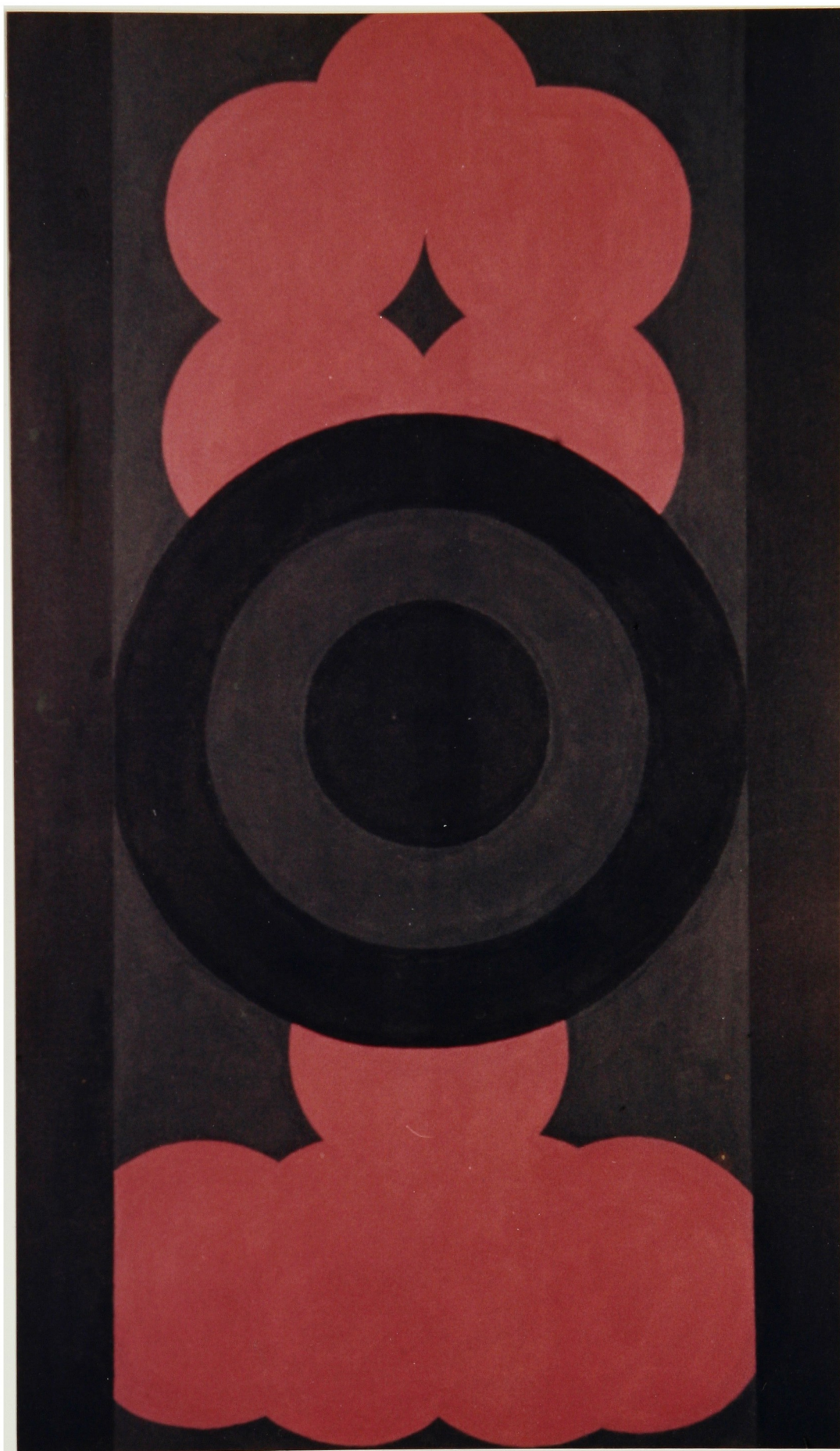
#### IV. DESIGN FROM A TANTRIC MANUSCRIPT

Acrylic on canvas. 24" x 42" November 1968

This painting has as its basis a series of painting from a manuscript of the Suddhachittavani, or course of correct understanding. It is from western India c. 18th century A.D. The theme of the series is the creation of the universe.

The painting was produced for a class assignment in which a particular work was chosen and used in the making of a new work.

This painting was especially important, in that a series of paintings followed that developed directly out of this assignment (Themes from Saint Matthew and Saint Mark).



V. THEME FROM SAINT MATTHEW I

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" Spring 1969

Then will appear the sign of the Son  
of man in heaven, and then all the  
tribes of the earth will mourn, and  
they will see the Son of man coming  
on the clouds of heaven with power  
and great glory;

Saint Matthew 24:30





V. THEME FROM SAINT MATTHEW II

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" Spring 1969





V. THEME FROM SAINT MATTHEW III

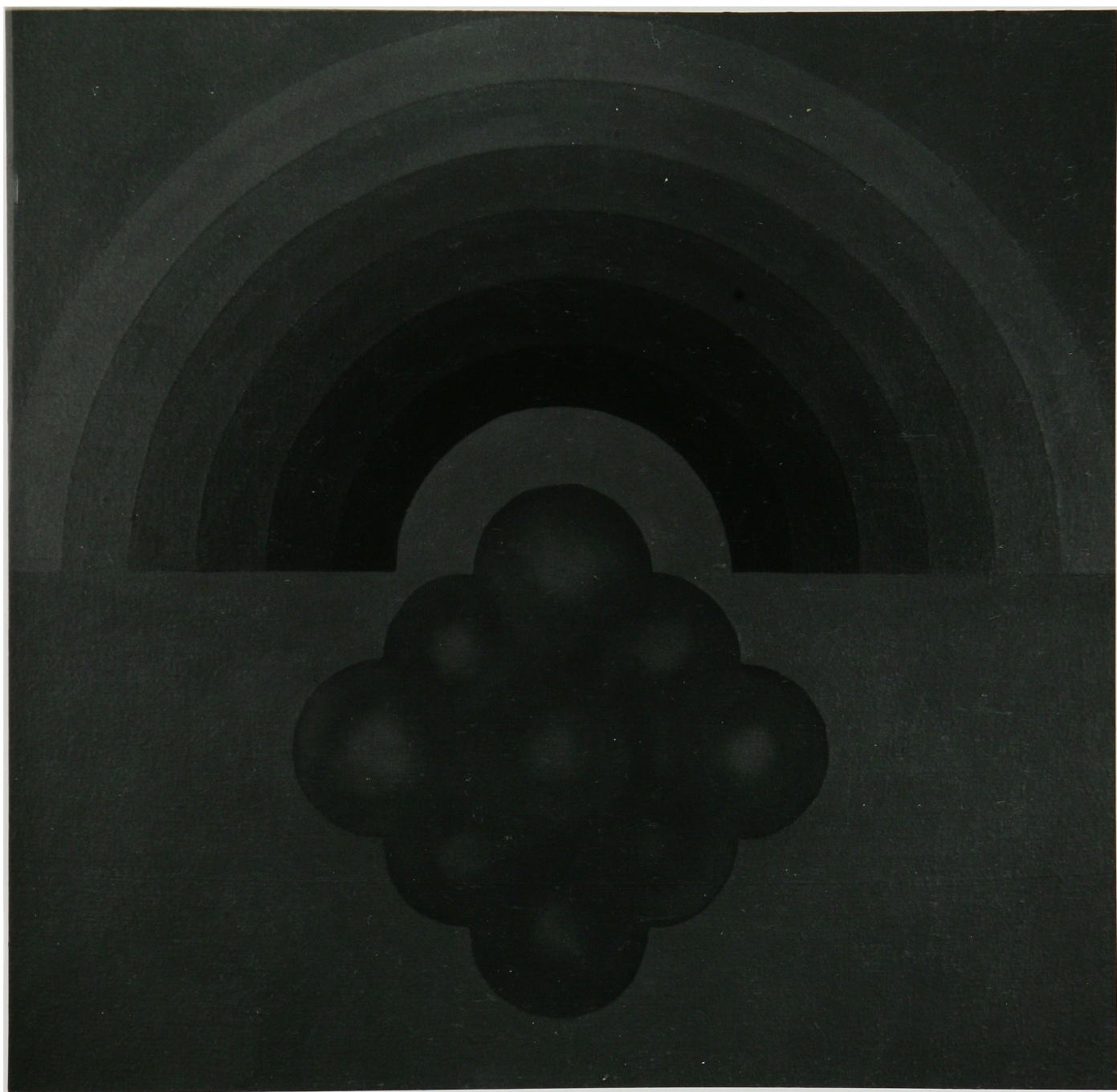
Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" Spring 1969





V. THEME FROM SAINT MATTHEW IV

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" Spring 1969



VI. THEME FROM SAINT MARK

Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas  
28" x 48" March-April 1969

And then they will see the Son of man  
coming in clouds with great power and  
glory.

Saint Mark 13:26

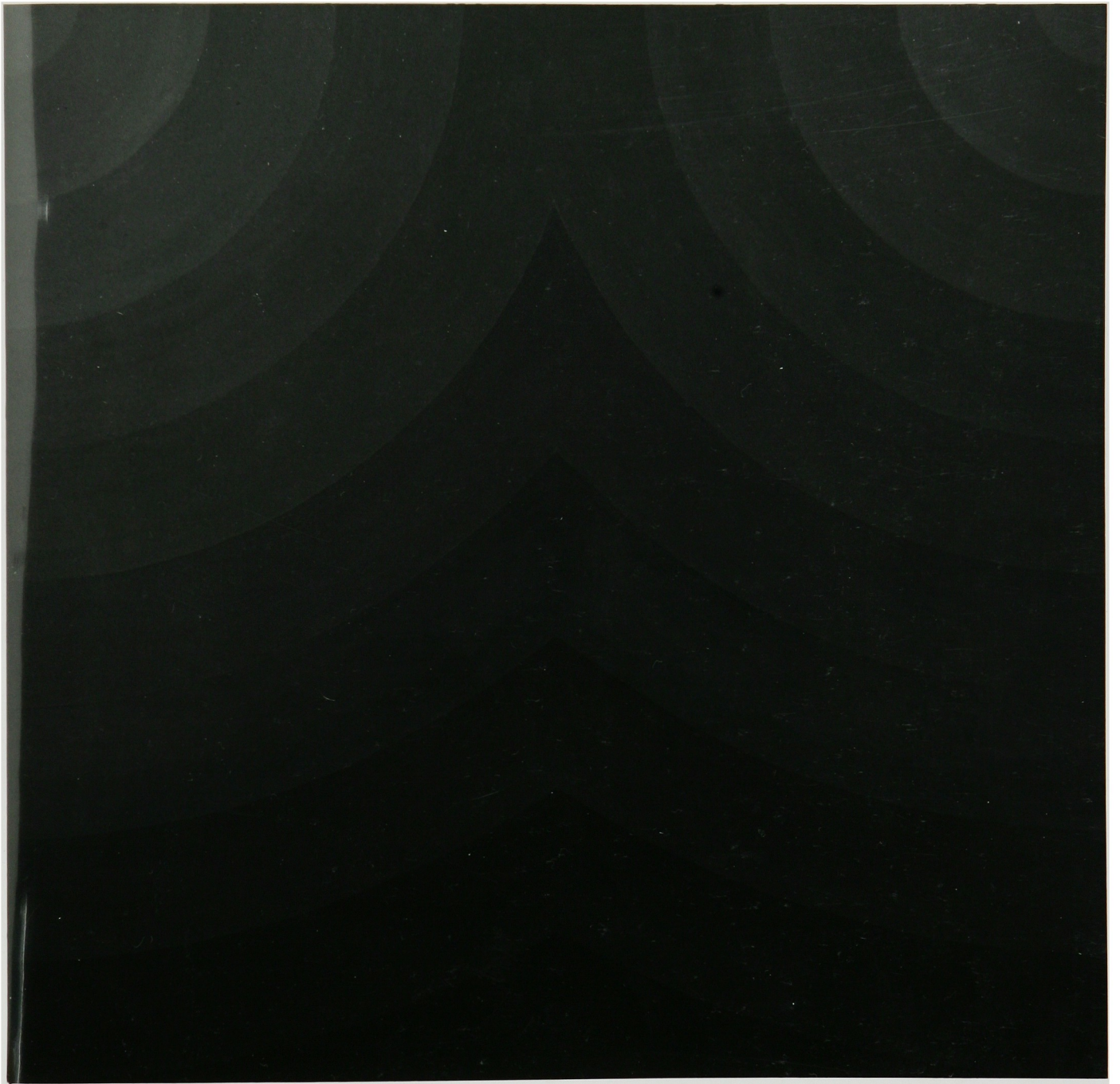




VII. KNIGHT

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" March 1969





VIII. GRAVESTONES

Acrylic on canvas. 28" x 36" April 1969

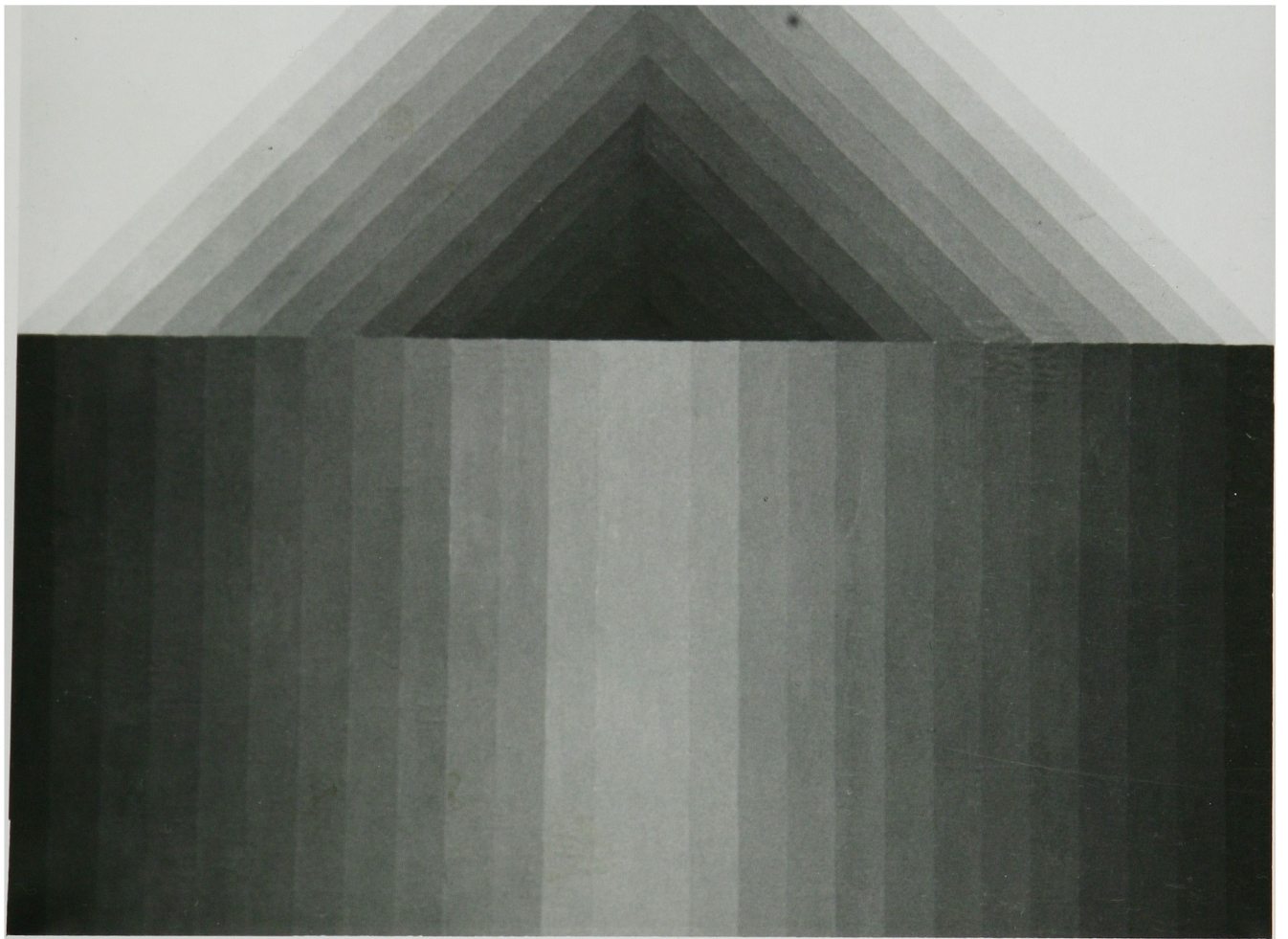




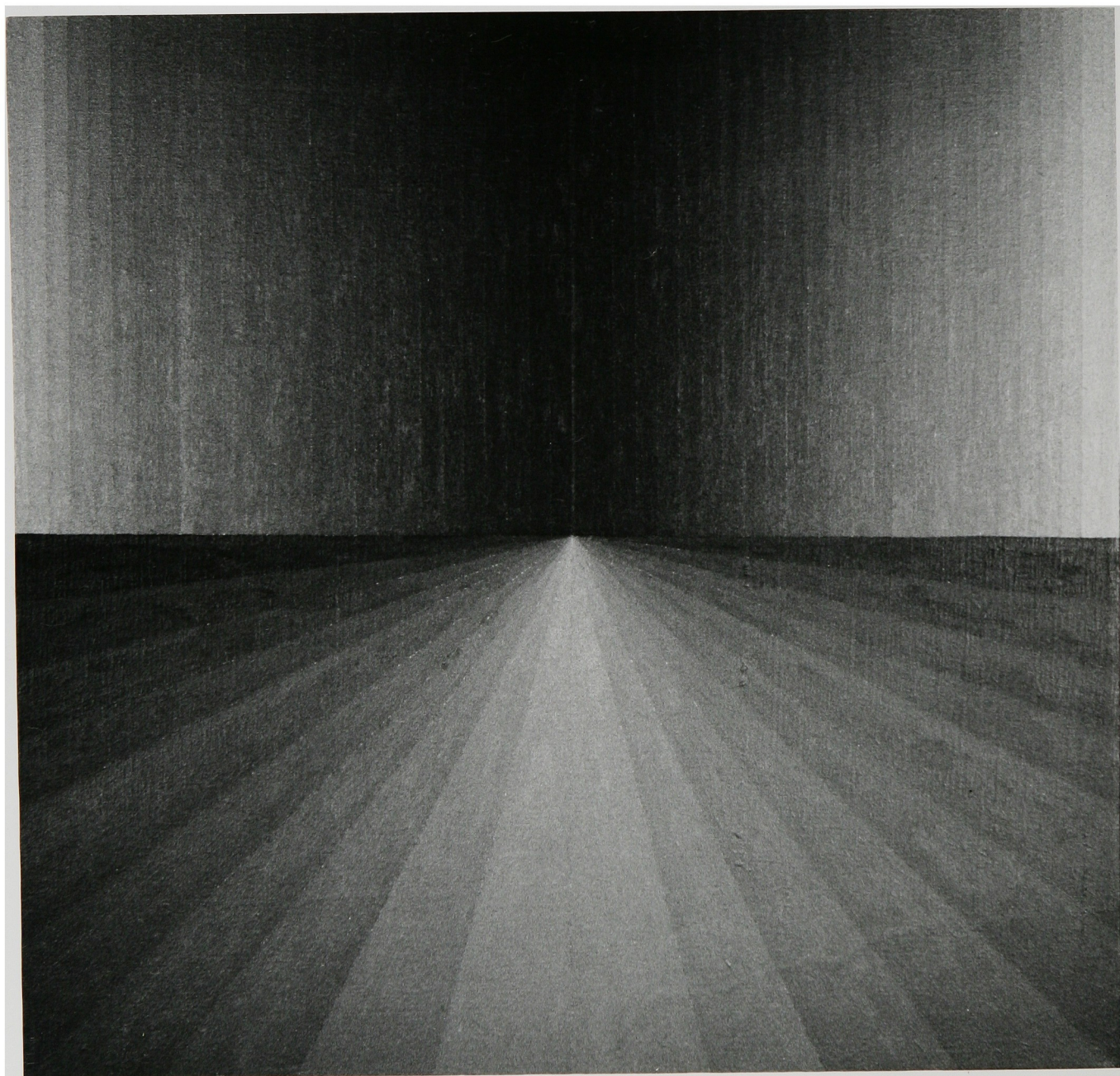


IX. CLAPBOARD

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" April 1969







X. RAIN I

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" May 1969





X. RAIN II

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" May 1969





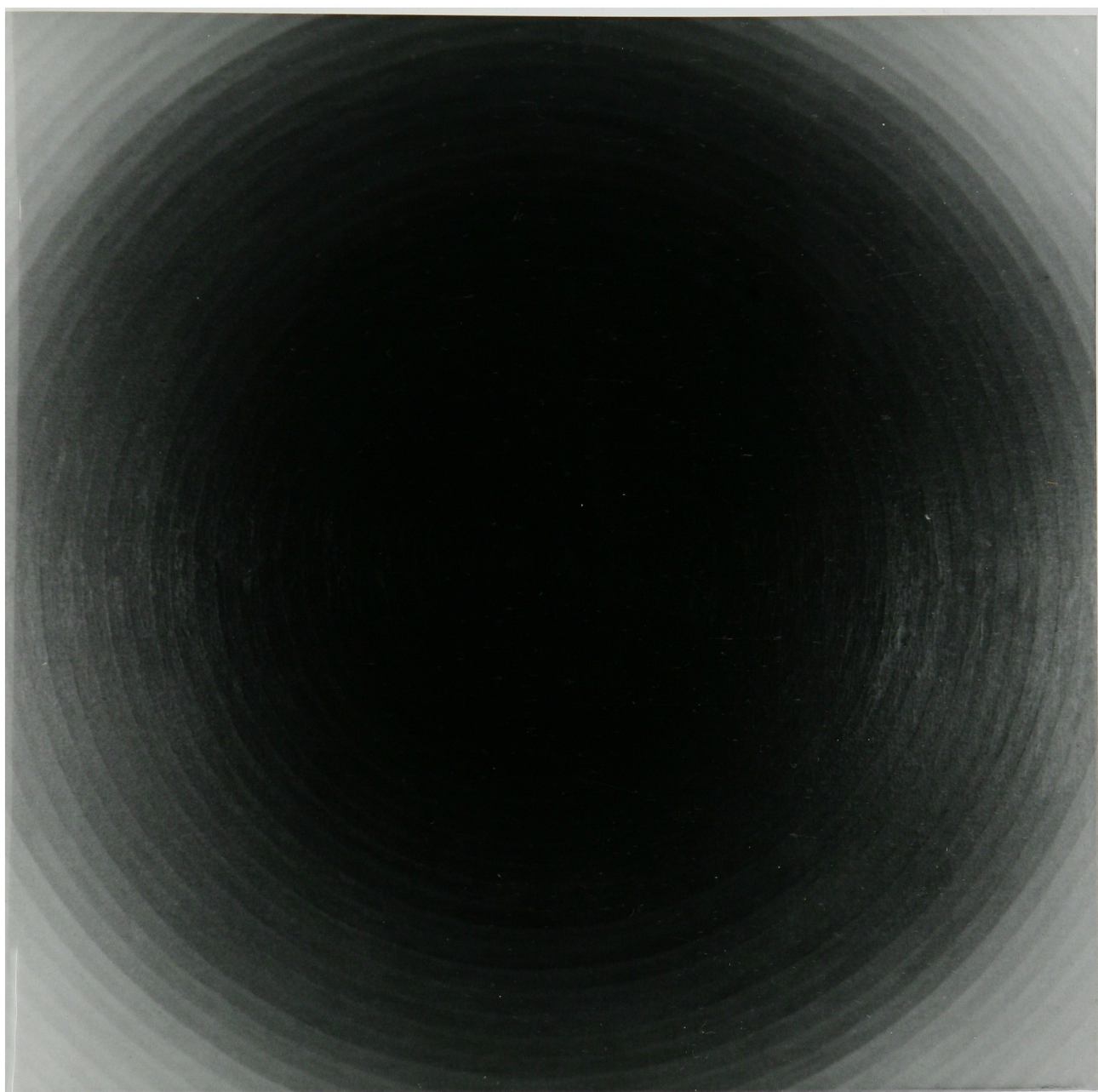
XI. SCAPE

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" May 1969



XII. NIGHT

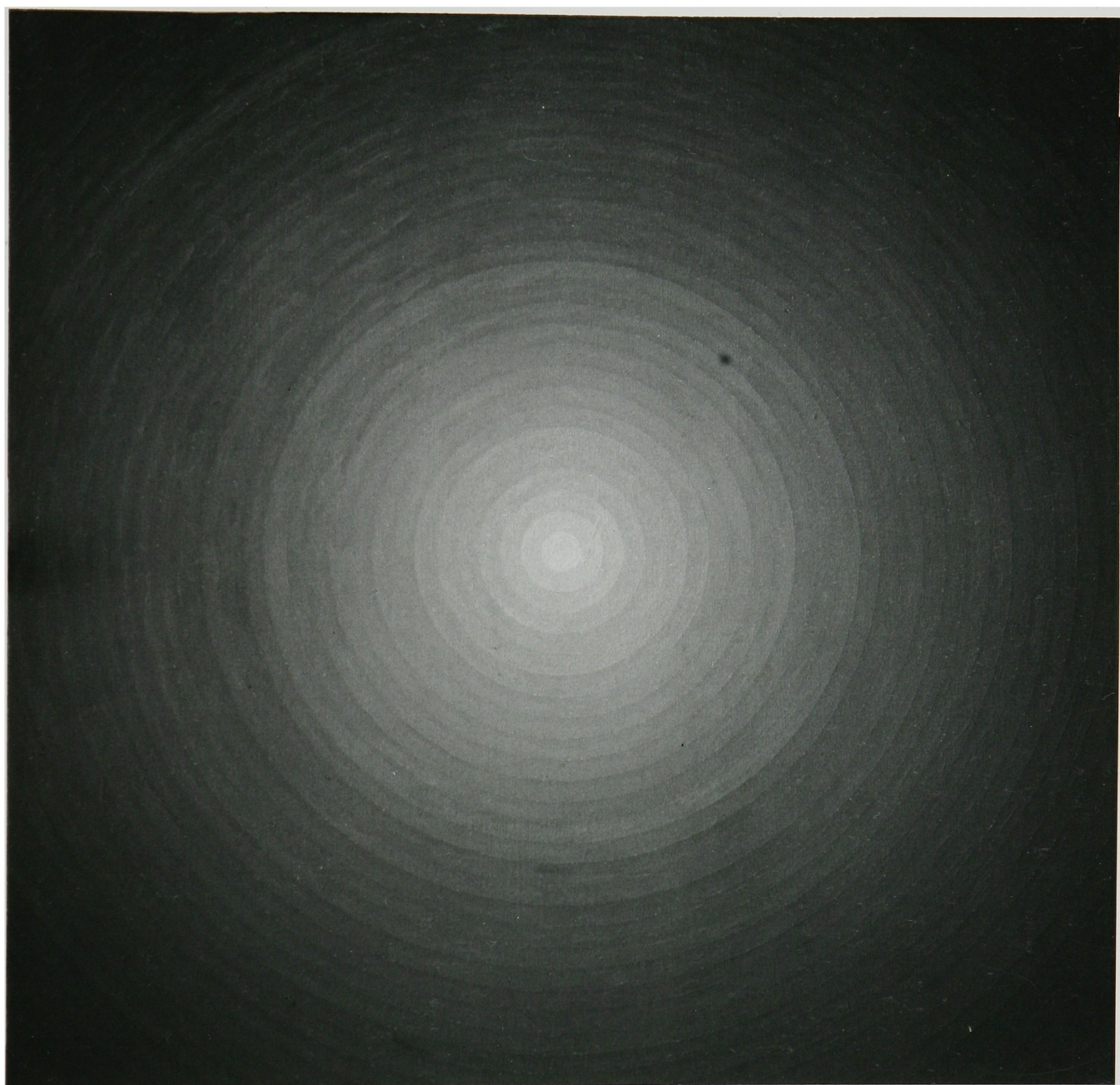
Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" May 1969



XII. DAY

Acrylic on canvas. 26" x 26" May 1969





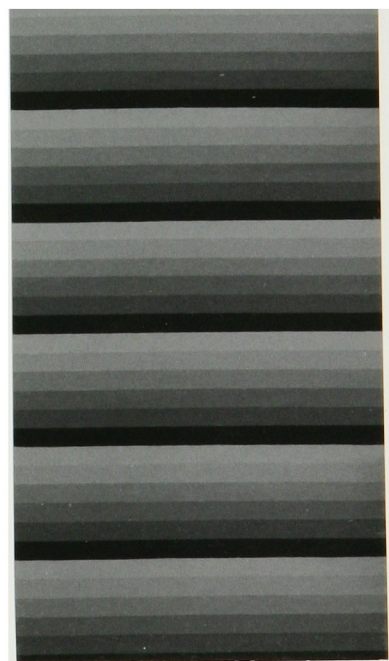
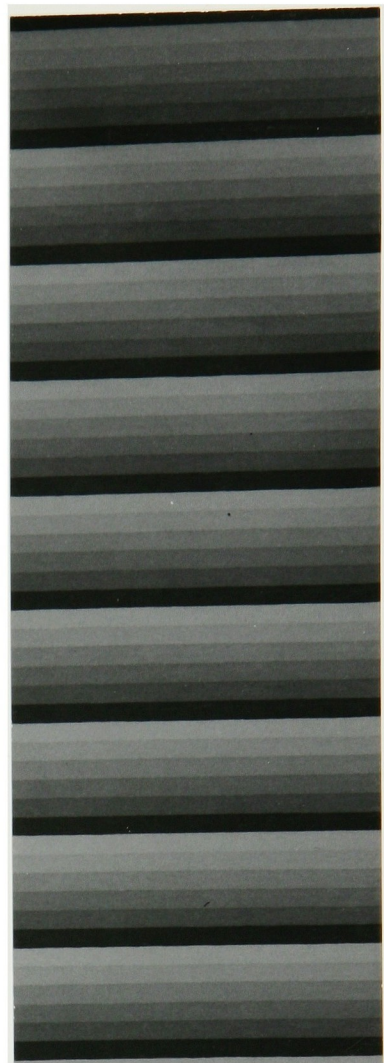
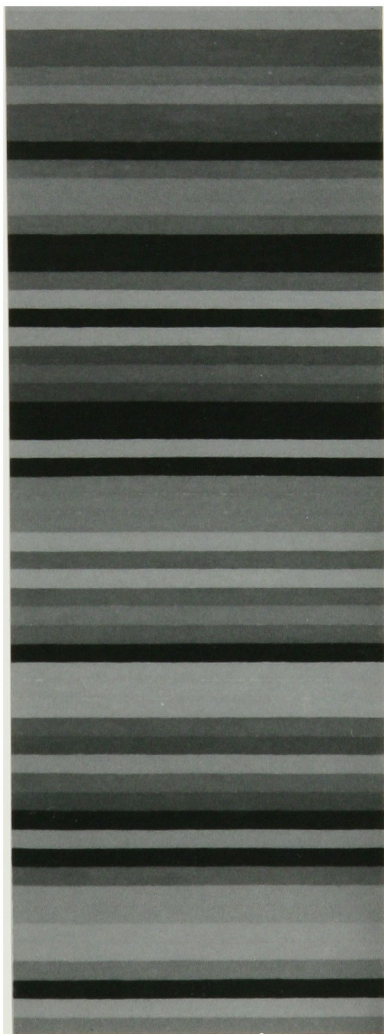
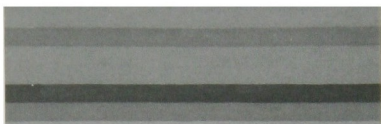
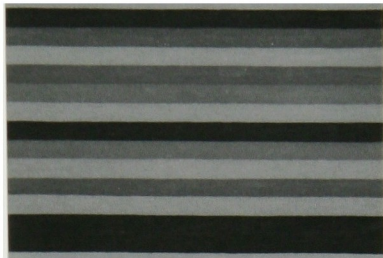
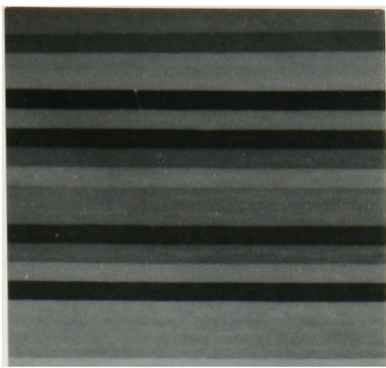


### XIII. INTEGRATION, DISINTEGRATION

Acrylic on canvas. 20" x 103" May 1969

The painting INTEGRATION employs the use of gradations of value to produce an impression of forms, not unlike a colonnade. The interaction of the bands of differing values is responsible for the appearance of "fluting," similar to that found on a Doric column.

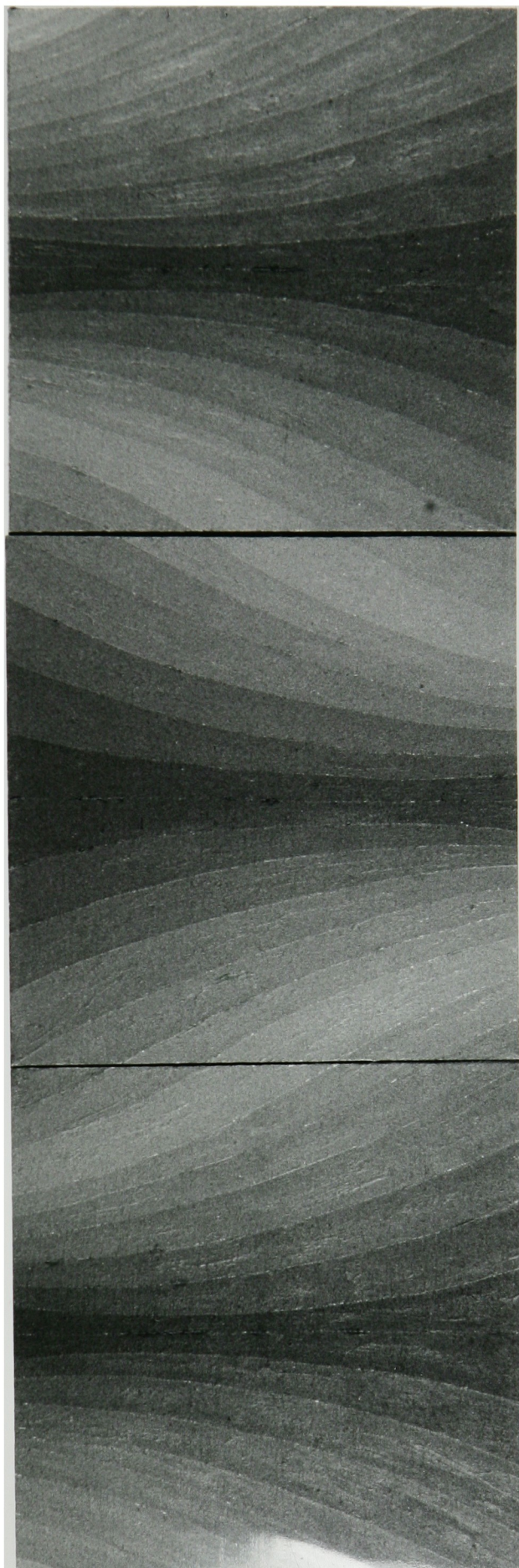
DISINTEGRATION was made on the exact plan of INTEGRATION using the identical values of paint. The placement of each value was determined by the casting of a die. Because the values seldom are situated to produce a gradation, the fluting-like effect is seldom found. Despite the random selection in this painting, it is amazingly well balanced. Why? It is not the fault of the artist. Different persons were used in casting the die to produce the series. It was entirely a random process.



XIV. Miniature. FOUNT I

Acrylic on canvas. 6" x 18" May 1969





XIV. Miniature. FOUNT II

Acrylic on canvas. 6" x 18" May 1969





## SUMMARY

This Thesis Report is an account of a particular period in my development as a painter. The research that has gone into this, while not an initiator of my way of painting, has strengthened my aims and purposes.

The study of historical sources has given an understanding of the continuity and interdependence of art. That, alone, is worth the time and effort spent.

But this is a report of a particular period. What of the future? The only thing that can be said is that enough ideas have been engendered to keep one busy for a considerable period of time. These ideas, it is hoped, will produce their own stimuli for other ideas.

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